



News Release

Arizona Department of Public Safety

2102 West Encanto Boulevard – Post Office Box 6638

Phoenix, Arizona 85005-6638

Date: March 7, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Direct Inquiries to:

pio@azdps.gov

DPS Seizes Approximately 14 lbs. Hydroponic Marijuana from a Traffic Stop

On March 7, 2009, at about 3:50 PM, an Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) Officer made a traffic stop eastbound on Interstate 10 near Milepost 86. The vehicle was identified as a 2002 Mazda 2002 with two occupants and was stopped for improper display of the license plate.

During the contact with the driver and passenger, the DPS Officer observed some unusual behavior from the two occupants and also detected the strong odor of marijuana coming from inside the vehicle. The officer requested a DPS Canine unit to assist. The K-9 was deployed and alerted to the rear of the Mazda. A subsequent check of the trunk area revealed a large duffel bag which contained the Hydroponic Marijuana. The two occupants were taken into custody and initially detained for further questioning.

The Hydroponic Marijuana was packaged into several different plastic bags. Each plastic bag was labeled with a code number and a one word description of the type of marijuana contained inside. In addition, there were separate glass jars of the marijuana that were believed to be used to retrieve a sample of the product to a buyer. Also there was a separate piece of paper which identified what the code number represented and the marijuana type. Hydroponically grown marijuana produces a considerable more potent and vibrant plant which is why the street value is much higher than field grown marijuana. At this point it is unknown where the Hydroponic Marijuana may have been grown or what the final destination would have been for the contraband load.

Suspects:

John Conniff, age 49, resident of Phoenix, employed as a respiratory therapist

Michelle Conniff (spouse), age 47, resident of Phoenix, employed as a 6th grade educator.

Both suspects were charged with Possession of Marijuana, Possession of Marijuana for Sale, Transportation of Marijuana for Sale, Conspiracy to Distribute/Sale Marijuana and booked into the Fourth Avenue Jail. The vehicle and marijuana were seized and entered into evidence.

DPS Director Roger Vanderpool states that this traffic stop is one of the many thousands that are regularly conducted by skilled DPS Patrol Officers which have resulted in large amounts of dangerous drugs being seized and preventing them from making it to neighborhood streets and homes through Arizona and the country.

Photos of the vehicle, marijuana and suspects are contained as an attachment with this release.

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